



News Release

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Contacts: [Bob Woolrich](#), Shellfish Program
[Gordon MacCracken](#), Communications Office

360-236-3329

360-236-4072

Shellfish harvest approved near Dash Point in south King County

OLYMPIA — Commercial geoduck harvesting on about 200 acres of offshore water between Dash Point and Saltwater state parks in King County has been approved for the first time. This new area connects with a site immediately to the north that was approved for commercial geoduck harvest in late 2008. Divers will work from boats to harvest the geoduck clams.

The Redondo wastewater treatment plant's discharge site was relocated to allow the offshore geoduck harvest area to open. The agency was unable to approve the shoreline for shellfish harvesting because parts of the shore north of the park don't meet health standards due to localized urban runoff.

"This is another cooperative effort that has resulted in the opening of a productive area for shellfish harvest," said Bob Woolrich, growing area manager for the state Department of Health.

At the request of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the state health department evaluated marine water quality, pollution sources and shoreline drainages to determine that the waters are safe for harvesting. Geoduck tissue was tested for heavy metals. No health concerns were evident. Routine water quality testing will continue as part of the state's commercial shellfish monitoring program.

"The tribe, the state and Lakehaven Utility District have worked hard for the past several years to accomplish this upgrade. Both the tribe and state will benefit commercially," said Eric Bennett, shellfish director for the Puyallup Tribe. "We all benefit from a cleaner environment needed for shellfish harvesting, but this is just a small first step to improve Puget Sound's ecosystem. The tribe will use all possible resources to protect its home."

Note for recreational shellfish harvesters:

The best way to be safe when digging shellfish is to check [the Department of Health's recreational shellfish maps](http://www.doh.wa.gov/shellfishsafety.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/shellfishsafety.htm), call the state biotoxin hotline (800-562-5632), or contact your [local health agency](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm).

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